

California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout

March 14

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Darren Mierau

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Thank you for inviting me. It's a privilege to be here.

It's been a busy year for the CAC. We hosted quarterly meetings in April, August, and October 2018 and March 2019. Meeting agendas focused on:

- State grant program priorities
- Streamlining of regulatory compliance and permits for salmonid recovery programs
- The CA Environmental Flows Framework under development by SWRCB and UC Davis
- State and federal hatchery operations in CA Central Valley
- Reformulating the FRGP Peer Review Committee and its oversight functions with the Department

And I want to thank you for your appointment of four prior and new members to the PRC!

The CAC provisionally supports SB 1, SB 19, and SB 69, pending forthcoming discussions within our Committee to better understand these bills.

- SB 1 will restore species protections, including for salmon, sturgeon and steelhead, that existed prior to 2017
- SB 19 asks DWR and SWRCB to develop a plan to deploy a network of stream gauges to help close the data gap on California's water supply
- SB 69 calls for use of DNA as a hatchery tagging approach, encourages CDFW to expand use of ocean net pens for hatchery salmon release, and calls for CDFW to identify dams within the state for removal that are a priority to protect and conserve fish and wildlife

Committee report on the status of the FRGP Peer Review Committee:

- appointment of new PRC members [Thanks Again!]
- selection of a new PRC Chair Matt Clifford
- drafted a Charter that re-establishes our oversight

Report regarding restoration scientists' dialogue with CDFW grant program staff to bring forth recommendations from the restoration community on ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of CDFW's grant programs. Resulted in 18 recommendations delivered to Director Bonham in December:

- The CACSST hopes that this "Ad Hoc" Restoration Committee can continue into the future
- One unresolved issue was a recommendation for grant programs to utilize federal accounting rules and indirect cost recovery agreements (NICRA); CACSST is requesting the Committee's assistance in seeking an answer from the Department as to why this is not feasible for the department when other state grant programs allow for this

Highlight two funding-related problems in our salmon and steelhead recovery efforts:

First, millions of dollars in federal and state tax spent annually for the recovery of native salmon and steelhead. However, we lack sufficient funds to monitor the population status and their recovery.

- CDFW and NMFS Coastal Monitoring Program is severely under-funded
- Needs at least \$15-20 mil per year to monitor ten ESA listed salmonid populations
- Today, this lack of funding for basic monitoring makes investment in salmon and steelhead restoration less efficient; the CAC is committed to helping find a solution to this basic, but important, problem
- Additionally, funding is needed for basic streamflow monitoring (addressed in SB19)

Thus, we need a stable, long-term source of funding for salmon and steelhead monitoring outside of competitive grant programs, to ensure continuity over the long term.

Second, the plight of California's coho salmon. Coho are State and Federally listed as endangered, and populations south of Golden Gate Bridge are currently at high risk of extinction. Scientists believe these populations are only being sustained by the operations of the Kingfisher Flat Broodstock facility, a joint facility of the Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project and National Marine Fisheries Service, and Department of Fish and Wildlife Service.

- The KF Facility lacks dedicated funding of approximately \$675,000/year; existing funding expires May 2020; approximately half this funding has come through the competitive grant programs sponsored by the local NGO Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project
- We need a stable, long-term source of funding outside of competitive grant programs, to ensure continuity over the long term
- The Scott Creek monitoring program lacks dedicated funding of approximately \$400,000/year; existing funding expires September 2019
- While habitat restoration and streamflow protection actions advance, establishing this program as a priority is essential to saving coho along CA's central coast.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here.

Sincerely,



Darren Mierau
Chair, CACSST

CC: Tom Weseloh